

# Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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## **The Totally Unscientific Study of the Search for Human Happiness.**

Poundstone, Paula (Author)

May 2017. 304 p. Algonquin, hardcover, \$25.95. (9781616204167). 792.7602.

Over the course of several years, Poundstone (*There's Nothing in This Book That I Meant to Say*, 2006) conducted “scientific experiments” concerning what makes people happy, and she relays them here. She tries to get organized once (make that twice) and for all. She spends a day hugging as many people as she can. She rents that surefire midlife-happiness-bringing vehicle, a Lamborghini, for a day. She tries to reconnect with her many pets, whom she fears she’s neglected. A crack writer of uncommonly hilarious observations, she organizes her experiments into clever categories (hypotheses, field notes, constants, conclusions, etc.) and measures happiness gained and lost on her invented scale of *heps*, *balous*, and fractions thereof. In between it all, the stuff of life fills in. One gets the impression that Poundstone is either parenting one or all three of her kids, scraping together her formidable, continuously strenuous career, hopping a plane, or sifting a litterbox at all times. As readers may expect, this isn’t really science-y. But it is smart, sweet, and laugh-out-loud funny balm for exceedingly stressful times.

— *Annie Bostrom*